

The Three Mistakes Hiccup Made On Outcast Island
by Astrid Goes For A Spin

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1. The Beginning

Something I've been sitting on since the season finale. (Quite a while, it seems.) Multi-chapter, and, for once, completely pre-written. Expect quick updates. :)

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><p>~ The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing ~

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><p>"Man the fort, Hiccup. They need me out there." Gobber stops at the door, adjusting the metal socket on his left arm and pointing at Hiccup. "Stay. Put. There. You know what I mean." And without another word, Gobber raises his axe-hand into the air and gives a truly terrifying battle yell and runs lopsidedly out of the shop.

Hiccup has no such intention of staying. put. there. He watches him go, and then wheels right back around to get the Mangler, ripping the tarp off with shaking fingers, praying to Odin that those wheels will work long enough to get it to the bluff behind his house.

Stomach jumping into his throat, Hiccup grabs the handles and steers it slowly around so it's facing out the door, and then takes off, dashing through the haphazard battle and trying not to get killed.

"Hiccup! What are you doing?"

Hiccup gives a tiny yell and ducks a Viking with an axe, running as

hard as he can through the village.

"Get back inside!"

"Yeah, I know," he calls over a shoulder, and very narrowly misses running down one of his father's lieutenants, who has a unique type of scolding inflection of his name as well. "Be right back!"

The weight of the Mangler is lopsided, and Hiccup can't steer it straight. He wobbles from side to side, Vikings of every kind pausing in their tasks and various battles to leap out of his way.

It only gets harder when he finally makes it out of the slowly-burning-down village and onto the grass, which is hard to roll over, too thick and soft. His wheels aren't wide enough. Please. Please. Please._

He's panting by the time he gets to the bluff, grunting with effort as he pulls the protecting wooden case off of his contraption. After that, it requires yet more work to arm, but Hiccup has practiced this sequence so many times he's dreamed about it. He grabs the end of the cannon and pulls it down to eye level and flips a knob, setting the ropes to winding and tightening, ready for launch. Lastly, he takes the handles attached to the cords of the crossbow and drags them back until they click and stay.

Standing on the handles of the cart, Hiccup tries not to breathe and listens. He waits, hearing different types of dragon screams from several areas of the village behind him. He waits, and he listens, and he knows he's chosen his spot well. One of the catapults is just in front of him, close enough to count the stones but far enough to avoid the flaming shrapnel that's sure to come.

Sooner or later, a Night Fury is going to come and blast this last, unmanned catapult into smithereens. And that's when Hiccup will strike.

"Come on," he mutters into the darkness, gliding his own little catapult back and forth. "Gimme something to shoot at. Gimme something to shoot at!"

He doesn't have to wait long.

Hiccup cranes his neck, searching the stars for anything, absolutely anything, that will hint at the location of his target. He knows what he's looking for, and only seconds pass before he's found it.

Darkness._

It's black on black. The Night Fury blends so well with its backdrop that the only thing that distinguishes it from the sky itself is its lack of stars. It's moving so quickly. Hiccup's eyes widen and he brings his hands up closer to the sights. He lowers his face and squints through it, following his prey.

He knows for sure it's a Night Fury now â€“ the scream sounds far off and distant, but all of a sudden it's present, right there in front of him, and the catapult explodes into stars, white and blue, so close he could run up and touch. It catches fire.

Hiccup sees one glimpse of the dragon — black wings outlined by the catastrophe — and screws up his eyes in preparation for the kick.

He shoots.

It throws him backward, off the Mangler, and he's on his back, legs attempting frantically to regain his standing position. He scrambles back up on hands and knees, hearing the ropes and rocks whistling through the silent air, and suddenly something so close and feral is shrieking, and he can see it fall in one long, unbroken arc.

It goes quickly, so much faster than he could have ever imagined. He's breathing so hard his lungs and his throat -Odin, even his teeth - hurt.

"I hit it," he gapes. It rushes over him in one big wave. "Yes! I actually hit it! Did anybody see that?" He crows, punching the air.

A horrible dragon noise comes from behind him. Hiccup whips back around just in time to see the biggest Monstrous Nightmare he's ever seen in his life — (only the best Vikings go after those) — crush his precious Mangler into splinters.

"Except for you."

2. One

What did I tell you? Only nine days this time. Prewritten. It's magic.

Yes, I know I deceived you with that first chapter. You're thinking, "But Astrid, Hiccup wasn't on Outcast Island there at all!"

Have faith, readers. Have faith. I'm not finished yet. We still have (gasp) three mistakes left to go.

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><p>~ The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing ~

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><p>"It says there's a reason that there's only Night Furies on that island," Hiccup says abruptly, flipping the single page of one of the notebooks as he carefully traces a Night Fury face on his doubled map. Toothless, interested, comes over, and Hiccup looks up at him, slightly worried.<p>

"Turns out, you guys aren't that friendly to other dragons." He turns back and reads from the notebook. "'Herds of Night Furies can be extremely hostile to other species.'" Hiccup takes a deep breath, dread descending over him, and stares at his wall. "If the other kids come with me on their dragonsâ€!"

"Well." Frowning, Hiccup shuts the old notebook and stands, stretching slightly. "Looks like it's just you and me, Toothless," he says softly, reaching for the satchel hanging off his bedpost and trying to quell the rising tide of panic. The hope that he'd fostered only that morning suddenly had yet another complication. Other speciesâ€|did that just mean dragon species? Or were they bad to humans, too? He's confident that Toothless can protect him, but against that manyâ€|

Why is everything he tries to do so hard?

But he's already made up his mind, and he's not going back on it now. It'll be better this way if things go wrong. Only Hiccup will get hurt. He's more than willing. Toothless' family is worth almost anything he has to give. He tilts his head at the stairs, indicating Toothless go down them first, and then he follows. Hiccup grabs the last apple from the bowl on the table and a jug, stuffing them into his bag.

"Come on," he whispers, half-tiptoeing out of the house and shutting the door behind him. He stumbles down his front steps and climbs on Toothless' back. "Well, this is it, Toothless. You're finally gonna see you're not alone." Hiccup clicks his leg into place and they take off, the strong black wings pumping high over his head on either side of him.

Hiccup stays quiet for a little while, then says brightly, "Next stop, the Isle of Night."

3. Two

The meat, you could say, of the story. Dead center; the first bit I wrote. I was mainly stunned at the stupidity of Hiccup's idea [any normal person would never have thought to use their prosthesis as a club, but, then again, Hiccup's a bit ABnormal] and was inspired to write it into something a bit more rational. Hiccup is very shortsighted. :)

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><p>~ The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing ~

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><p>"Guard, guard!" His voice sounds tinny, and weak. Gritting his teeth, Hiccup draws up his chest and takes a deep breath, trying to inject some hopelessness into his shout. "I can't take it!" he calls. "Please!" he pleads. "I'll tell Alvin whatever he wants to know," (for the first time in his life, the lie comes easily) "but let me out of here!"<p>

Immediately, the deep-chested Outcast goes straight for the lock, obediently fumbling with his thick fingers. So immediately, Hiccup thinks for a second that they might have anticipated this, been waiting for it. Anxiety makes a grab at his throat â€" is he that predictable?

Hiccup sucks in his breath, wobbling slightly on his right leg,

trying to balance by keeping his quivering left as still as possible, pressing the front of the left into the back of the right. It caves slightly and his stomach contracts with fear — fear of falling. _He can't balance._

As soon as the bars move away, Hiccup tightens his fingers around the metal of his detached prosthetic leg and takes a swipe at his undefended face.

It connects with a smacking sound, flesh on metal. Hiccup winces more than his victim. _Oh gods, please tell me it's not broken!_

The guard stumbles backward, right into the bars of Mildew's cage. _Please be unconscious, please be unconscious —_ He watches warily, but the Outcast just scratches his beard and prepares to charge.

"That's worked a little better in my mind!"

Hiccup has never realized just how acutely helpless he is. He can't walk by himself, he certainly can't _fight_, and while his prosthetic leg has been very useful in several circumstances (falling down cliffs and reaching inconveniently placed puzzle pieces, for instance) this is _not_ one of them.

Stupid. Thing. It's done this to him before, he remembers. He slips on it in the ice. That Smothering Smokebreather had grabbed onto it for the iron content. Traitor! Does it _attract_ trouble, or does _he?_

Hiccup has no choices left — even if he takes another swing (which won't work anyway, now that the Outcast is all riled up), he won't be able to stand to fight, let alone _get away._ For a split second, he thinks he'll run — drop his weapon and dash for the door before he remembers that the weapon is _part of his body_ and about that emptiness (even if it doesn't always feel empty; the phantom sensations are still lingering) under his left knee. Hopping is not an option.

But apparently Mildew grabbing him by the back of his tunic and smashing his head into the cage _is._

Hiccup has only taken off his leg a _few_ times. On a place like Berk, one has to be ready at any time, and he's incredibly afraid to be caught without both legs on if needed. He should not be able to somehow get it on and be ready to run off; but somehow he manages to tie it to his leg without even sitting down, which just goes to show what people are really capable of when they believe they are in mortal danger.

The key slides across the floor and Hiccup picks it up, looking at Mildew in slight wonderment. "Wow. Thanks." He turns to go.

"Wait! Take me with you," begs the old man. Hiccup doesn't want to stop, he doesn't want to turn, and he _most definitely_ doesn't want to feel the compassion forcing its way up from his stomach.

But he does.

"You're kidding me, right?"

"No! I know how to get around this island!" This brings up a whole plethora of worries. When has Mildew been missing from Berk? He doesn't go on fishing trips! When could he have had time to tour Outcast Island?

"I could help you, 'iccup! Please." He's gripping the bars of his cage now, desperation souring the air between them. "Let me make it up to you!"

Hiccup's hesitating. The game is lost. He growls at his own stupidity and unlocks the cage.

"Don't make me regret this, Mildew!"

4. Three

Expect a rapid upswing of updating! Fanfiction has become my life, as today was my last day of school. Victory!

And now an unhappy chapter. ;)

* * *

><p>~ The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing. ~

* * *

><p>"OI! You weren't gonna leave before we finished our business, were you?"

He can tell that this is a trap. Alvin is provoking him, and he can feel it all the way down in his gut. But any doubts he's having are being swept away in a tide of righteous anger.

Why can't he just leave him alone? He's invaded Berk, kidnapped Hiccup and chained Toothless. He's threatened the worst, many times. His entire family and all his friends — everyone who matters to him in the world — are right here, right now. What more can he do? And Hiccup has dragons. What more can he possibly do?

Hiccup stands slowly, a hand on Toothless' neck. His growls are rumbling through his throat, and his teeth are seconds away from protracting. Hiccup can only see one thing — Alvin leaning out over the cliff — and he can only feel one thing — the texture of Toothless' scales.

Everything else is a blur, separated from him through a haze of anger.

"That's what I would expect from Stoick's li'l runt," he snarls.

From a great distance away, Hiccup hears Gobber's "Oh, boy," and Stoick's enraged, "HICCUP!"

The sounds don't make sense. They don't connect, and all he can feel is burning in his chest — the violence he was supposed to have

discovered a long time ago. He wants to make him hurt, cause Alvin a fraction of the pain he's done to him.

Alvin's laughing. Hiccup isn't resisting. Without taking his eyes off the other, Hiccup clammers on Toothless' back from the wrong side in his haste to get airborne.

Just as his leg clicks into place, he hears his father's "Hiccup, n—" then, "WE'VE GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR!"

Hiccup didn't want to come at all.

They're too far away to hear.

Alvin is standing by himself, exposed on the cliff, chortling that disgusting, ugly laugh.

"Do it, boy! I'm right here!" He raises that stupid, asymmetrical, imbalanced two-sided axe, and somewhere in the back of Hiccup's mind he can hear Toothless' warning scream building.

They're still ten feet away when Alvin swings, chopping downward — but it's not a strike — it's a signal. —

"NOW!"

5. The End

This is the end. I'm sorry for the wait; life got crazy and I totally forgot! But here it is, the finally installment of Three Mistakes.

Besides the three huge mistakes that Hiccup made in the episode, I included what could be considered the two biggest mistakes of his life. However, both of these — shooting down Toothless and letting him go — turned out for the better. Life lesson.

* * *

><p>~ The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing ~

John Powell

* * *

><p>"Oh, the gods hate me. Some people lose their knife in the mug, oh, no, not me; I have to lose an entire dragon?"

Snorting with frustration, Hiccup makes tiny Xs on his scribbled map, then loses patience entirely and scrapes his charcoal over the entire thing. He rolls his eyes, folds it with a snap and stuffs it into his pocket.

He's been looking for almost an hour, now. The sun is completely up and the birds too, and the cheerful atmosphere is doing nothing for Hiccup's mood.

This was his chance. His one chance. He thinks — no, he's sure —

that he shot down that Night Fury. But if he can't find it, what good will it do?

Frowning, Hiccup slaps a tree branch out of the way â€“ what a mistake. It swings back around and hits him right in the face, stinging his cheeks and eyelids and forehead. Great.

Hiccup steps forward and almost falls. There's a ditch. Hiccup's mouth drops open. The loam is rent in a curve, a deep trench that exposes the moist, dark dirt beneath the thick grass.

Heart pounding, blood pumping so hard it hurts, Hiccup slides down the side of the scar in the earth, staring with wide eyes as he comes up to the rise. He peeks over and â€“

There!

Hiccup gasps so hard it's all he can do not to choke; his trachea is suddenly not cooperating and he can't breathe and â€“

He throws himself down, presses his cheek flat against the forest floor, inhaling mulch and dirt and all sorts of things he'd rather not think about and really shouldn't be worrying about at this moment because there's a dragon and â€“

Gathering his nerve, Hiccup pushes himself up far enough to see.

He doesn't see much, at first. Slowly, he puts a hand up and comes up farther, mouth wide open and gaping.

Night Fury. It's obvious. The dragon is securely trussed, wings restrained by his thick bola rope. It's black, so black it couldn't possibly be mistaken for any other dragon in any of the worlds. Its head is flat with strange ears and â€“ Hiccup sharply stops thinking about the anatomy â€“ that no one has ever seen before â€“ and returns to his accomplishment.

It's dead.

It's dead â€“ because of him.

Hiccup can't quite think about that, though. He's so terrified his breath is coming in short gasps and pants. He fumbles all over his belt for his dagger that he never uses and scrambles to find a good way to hold it.

The only thing he can hear is his own heartbeat and panic. He stumbles over the rise and trips; the ground isn't even and he tumbles, almost falls, but catches himself by pressing his back against a huge, mossy rock just before the dead dragon.

He holds the knife out in front of him and leans around the boulder, catching sight of the beast properly, then coming out completely, dropping his arm to his side.

"Oh, wowâ€|" In three seconds, Hiccup's eyes take in everything: the ropes that only caught the left wing by four or five inches, the thick gray scars â€“ has he really hit it before? across the muscled shoulders, the heavy, still chest, the legs, scales scraped and shorn off, the claws, blunt and marbled and half-curled.

"I did it," he mutters to himself in wonderment. "I did it. This fixes everything! YES!" In a moment of sudden boldness, Hiccup darts up and puts his foot on the dragon's foreleg. "I have brought down this mighty beast!"

And then it moves.

It makes a noise like a sad yak and moves the leg Hiccup is leaning on. "Whoa!" Hiccup stumbles back into the rock, arms windmilling, petrified. The impact winds him. He has never been more afraid in his entire life. Instinctively he grabs for his dagger and points it tremblingly in front of him, looking up and down the body of the dragon for the best place to strike.

The long tail is folded back somewhere behind the head; the abdomen is strongly armed. Hiccup gapes all the way up the dragon — it's a good fifteen feet long, not counting the other half of the tail, at least — and when he reaches the head, its eyes are open.

They're terrible. They're ancient and green and textured and old, so wild and natural and primeval and raw. Its pupils are cold and calculating slits, keeping him frozen within their sights.

Hiccup gulps and tries to focus on the chest — he's going to stab the heart, if he can find it — but the eyes won't let him go, and he stares at them.

The dragon makes a sound, a sad, wheezing, huffing sound. Hiccup wonders how close to dead this dragon really is. Hiccup can't — his fingers are cramping from holding the dagger too hard. He takes several deep breaths in succession, but they don't seem to be doing him much good.

He looks back at the chest, then back at the eyes. He hadn't anticipated this — this confrontation. He wasn't ready. Hiccup had expected it to be safely dead when he reached it. If his father had come with him, he would have had help. He wouldn't have had to do this alone.

Because alone, it feels terribly like he's asking its permission to kill it. The dragon isn't willing to give it, either. Hiccup knows he can't do this — he can't kill the dragon while looking into its eyes. This isn't going to work.

Hiccup closes his eyes for several long seconds but is too scared to keep them closed any longer than this dragon could snap the ropes, couldn't it? The left wing only has a few inches and then it'd be free.

When Hiccup opens his eyes again, he stares pointedly at the chest, now rising and falling with painfully obvious breaths, and finds himself talking.

"I'm gonna kill you, dragon. I'm gonna—" Hiccup can't help stealing another glance at those terrible pale eyes — "I'm gonna cut out your heart and take it to my father." Hiccup closes his eyes again, rolls his head, and carefully repositions his hands. "I'm a Viking," he mutters faintly.

He has the sudden feeling that this dragon is judging him. "I am a VIKING," Hiccup tells the dragon aggressively. He takes another deep breath and stares straight ahead. He closes his eyes tight and raises the dagger.

Once it's up there, Hiccup doesn't know what to do. He knows how to do it — all he has to do is bring his arms down, hard. There will be blood; a lot of it. But what if he misses? What if the dagger glances off the scales and hits his foot? What if he passes out at the sight of it? What if he wounds the dragon but not badly enough to kill it? What if the dragon gets mad and kills him instead?

His eyes crack open.

The dragon is looking at him.

Hiccup can't help looking back. The dragon's eyelid widens and it sniffs the air. It lifts its head in Hiccup's direction. Hiccup's eyes widen too, taking it in.

This dragon knows it's about to die.

It's telling him this, without words. Hiccup can understand. The dragon — the Night Fury — is terrified. It's grounded and broken and absolutely, drop-dead terrified of him. Him. Hiccup, who has never done a single thing right in his life. Hiccup, who is terrified too.

Why should he be terrified? Something has clicked in a place that Hiccup doesn't understand, but he knows now. He knows why people — and dragons — are afraid of Vikings. Vikings will kill them. Vikings are merciless. Hiccup doesn't have any right to be afraid. He can do it.

Hiccup steels himself and takes another quick breath, holding the dagger still higher. Then the dragon moans — or maybe it was a sigh — and lays down its head.

It knows that the end has come. It knows Hiccup is about to

Hiccup tries again. He lifts his arms — and again — and his fists, dagger and all, drop dispiritedly on his head.

He cannot do it.

Hiccup's arm drops and he almost loses his grip on the knife. He rubs his face with his other hand. All his tension and fear has rushed out of him, leaving him with almost no sensation left. He gazes at the dragon, unseeing. What can he possibly do?

"I did this," he whispers. And then he turns to leave.

He has barely made it one step when it occurs to him that he hasn't done anything at all. Didn't he want to kill this dragon? If he can't do it now, he'll never do it. But if he leaves it here, it's going to die anyway. If he can't kill it, what's the point? He's never going to get a girlfriend. His dad is never going to like him.

If he's not going to kill it, why does it need to die?

Hiccup looks back at the dragon, taking deep and labored breaths. He scrunches his face over his indecision. He doesn't know what is right anymore.

He takes that one step and puts the dagger behind the rope binding the left wing and begins to saw at it. The dragon's eyelids fly open in shock or terror. It's hard to tell the difference.

Hiccup grabs the rope underneath it and drags his knife through that, too. He takes a quick look behind him thank the gods, nobody's heard all this noise and shears through the next one.

He has time for exactly one more before suddenly he's not kneeling on the soft wet earth anymore; in the space of a second he's been pinned against that same rock. He's banged his head, hard.

His neck fits easily between two of the dragon's claws. He's hyperventilating, his breath fast and loud and right in the dragon's face, which is so close he could spit at it. He can smell it, too: it smells like the outdoors, like salt and fish, like air and dirt, with a strange, spicy undertone that makes Hiccup want to throw up.

The huge, scaly black face is only inches from Hiccup's own, a deep growl vibrating in its chest. It is glaring at him, thinks Hiccup shrilly. Glaring. As if dragons can glare.

This one certainly is. It snorts into Hiccup's face. He can see himself reflected in those horrible beautiful eyes. The trees ring the bottom glassily, warping them out of shape. Hiccup grimaces and panics and tries to push against the ground and gain some leverage, but those blunt claws push deeper into his vest until one rests right on his collarbone and Hiccup promptly decides to stop struggling.

It's fate, he thinks a little wildly, about how their positions became so rapidly reversed. This dragon is about to kill me.

He stares right into its face, knowing that what he thought was true only person alive ever to have seen a Night Fury is about to become abruptly, fully false. Moments from now, Hiccup will be dead.

It rears up, inhaling and making noise. Its wings beat the air and make Hiccup's hair whip across his forehead. He gapes in horror as the Night Fury suddenly drops back right over him and he barely has time to think, This is it waiting for the shot, when the dragon screams right into his face.

And then it turns and is gone. He sees it slam against an outcropping of rock, still shrieking, and Hiccup is breathing so hard he's sure he's broken a lung. He can feel it, every fiber of his being, contained in his heart, and he grabs at it, trying desperately to keep it inside, intact. His fingertips can sense its jumping.

Hiccup reaches defeatedly for his knife and pushes himself to his feet blankly. He takes one step, feels everything give out all at once should have seen that coming and faints dead away.

* * *

><p>Those of you who know me know how rare it is for me to put a post-script. In fact, this is the first time ever. The quote I've been using for the past four chapters belongs to John Powell, the artist who composed the soundtrack for How To Train Your Dragon and many other animated movies, and one of my heroes.

**This has been fun. Farewell. :) **

End
file.